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STRICTURES

UPON THE

UNION

BETWIXT

GREAT BRITAIN

AND

IRELAND.

BY AN OFFICER.

Dublin.

PRINTED FOR BERNARD DORNIN, GRAFTON-STREET.

1798.

BRITISH MUSEUM
30 DEC 60

STRICTURES, &c.

FROM an object of ſo momentuous importance, as an Union between Great Britain and Ireland; he indeed muſt be endued with more than common apathy, who can turn with indifference—It commands the attention of every rank in ſociety; nor is the ſituation of any ſo deſpicable, as not to be affected by its probable conſequences.—And in truth I have little reaſon to ſuppoſe, that it lies neglected; the ſubject ſeems already debated with a keenneſs equal to its merits. It has been laid before the public in every guiſe which, either good ſenſe, fancy, intereſt or acri-

mony could beſtow upon it; and however inadequate I may be to throw new light upon a ſubject, upon all ſides ſo ably conteſted: I at leaſt have the merit of entering the field, as diſintereſted, and unprejudiced, as any of thoſe champions who have preceded me.

In a conteſt of this kind, which neceſſarily involves ſo many jarring intereſts; it may naturally, be expected that, the views, the wiſhes, the ſituations of individuals, will be apt to throw a falſe colouring upon the picture. The ſhades of life are various, the intereſts of mankind no leſs extended, and the mind ſo apt to flatter our ſelfiſh ſpeculations, as the ebullitions of patriotiſm; that it is little to be wondered at, that men equally intereſted for the good of their country, ſhould ſee that good to be obtained through ſuch oppoſite mediums;—ſhould indulge their ſpleen at the expence of their judgment;—and purſue the object of their wiſhes, by whatever

whatever means, either wit, learning, or political prejudice may prompt them to. Such ſpeculations ſhould therefore be liſtened to with diffidence, and he whoſe tone is moſt decided, is leaſt of all to be truſted. The wiſdom of a Senate might even here heſitate with property. I ſhall proceed with caution; 'tis perhaps my only recommendation to the attention of the public.

Before ballancing the mutual advantages of a Union betwixt Great Britain and Ireland, as the expediency of ſuch a meaſure is denied *in toto*, let me upon that preliminary point, ſay a few words in the firſt place.

Thoſe who oppoſe ſuch an Union make uſe of one of theſe two arguments: either that this is not the proper time for intruding ſuch a political innovation upon the rights of the Iriſh nation, when the ſpirits of men are already ſufficiently fer-

mented by recent tranſactions in the kingdom;—or, that a Union of Ireland with Great Britain, can never take place, but at the expence of the independence of the former, and the conſequent aggrandizement of the latter ſtate.

To argue, that this is not the proper time, for bringing ſuch a meaſure before the public eye, is tacitly allowing that, at ſome future period it might be acquieſced in with advantage:—But at preſent the ſituation of this kingdom, forbids ſuch an attempt. Behold a country ſcarce breathing from the ravages of civil fury, its fields died with the blood of its inhabitants, its villages depopulated, its harveſts laid waſte; the ſeeds of jealouſy germinating in every boſom; and party diſtinctions courting every claim that, can foſter and promote the ſpirit of revenge.—The picture is awful; and I am much afraid, that ſhould we ſolely truſt to the hand of time, to ſoften the foreground of ſuch

ſuch a landſcape, that thoſe radical evils, which have been the origin of all the miſeries of this country, would take a root ſo deep, ſo widely branched, as no laws, no policy, human or divine, not even ſelf intereſt itſelf, but muſt fail to check the growth of thoſe diſorders, which have already deluged this unhappy country, in civil warfare. The ſources of theſe evils are many;—they are however principally to be found, in the party feuds of proteſtant and catholic; in the unlimited tyranny of the greater over the ſmaller tenants;—and from abſentees truſting entirely the concern, the welfare, the very being of the poor cottager, to the arbitrary dominion—yes, ſometimes, to the illegal exactions of a ſelf-intereſted, cunning, pitiful agent. That theſe remarks are by no means novel, I ſhall readily grant:—that they are evils exiſting at the preſent moment who can deny?—evils foſtered by the hand of prejudice, ſupported by cuſtom, countenanced perhaps from neceſſity. If recognized

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by the public as the great ſource of theſe drawbacks upon the proſperity of Ireland, 'tis indifferent how often the remark be made, if a remedy be not applied. And where is that remedy to be found? In a Union, I reply—In a Union, ſo cloſely linked, that thoſe ſtubborn fetters, which the wiſdom of government hath ſo faſt interwoven, a ſimilarity of manners, an interchange of mutual benefits, a neceſſity ariſing from paſt events, may rivet ſtill cloſer together. 'Tis upon ſuch grounds that my hypotheſis reſts, nor in any part of my argument, ſhall I ever loſe ſight of them.

Whilſt the government of Ireland remains upon its preſent footing, I ſhall readily grant that it would be dangerous to enter fully into the claims of the Roman Catholics. If it is neceſſary for the well being of this ſtate, that the Proteſtant intereſt ſhould bear a decided ſuperiority; reſtrictions upon Roman Catholics muſt ſtill continue. I feel that I do not grant too much when I avow,

that

that even the welfare of Great Britain itſelf depends upon ſo momentous a meaſure. But change the queſtion—ſhould an Union take place, are ſuch reſtrictions requiſite?—By no means.—The political views of Ireland are extended. It has Great Britain for its range: and granting that you were to allow the Roman Catholics complete emancipation, how in ſuch a caſe could that effect the Parliament of Great Britain, or the Proteſtant poſſeſſions in Ireland?—The repreſentation of the kingdom in point of numbers being diminiſhed, there probably would be ſo decided a ſuperiority in favour of thoſe leading characters, who aſpired to that honour, as to bear down every attempt at oppoſition; political feuds would then be diminiſhed—their effects at leaſt transferred to a more diſtant quarter would be leſs ſenſibly felt, and in time every ſenſe of injury would vaniſh, and harmony would ſucceed. If my hypotheſis is true, what time ſo urgent as the preſent for bringing forward a meaſure,

which

which will heal theſe wounds, at the price of a few privileges to the Roman Catholics of Ireland; and what the Proteſtants will not feel themſelves intereſted to deny them. Wounds, which bleeding as they are at preſent from every pore, and planting the ſeeds of future rebellion, in minds open both to injury and revenge, are the more liable to be healed by impreſſions of gratitude, and that too at a time, when leaſt expected. Grant me for one moment, that my arguments are good, who then will dare to deny, that the Union of the Romon Catholics of Ireland with the Proteſtant intereſt would not promote the proſperity of the kingdom? Are reſtrictions upon three-fourths of any ſociety, the true mode of advancing its welfare? Where is the bud that will expand under the rod of the oppreſſor? The genius which bloſſoms only under the foſtering hand of indulgence, will ſicken and die if unprotected—if limits be chained to hope, and if the unfettered mind muſt be goaded by reſtrictions, which

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neither intereſt can remove, nor the brighteſt talents ameliorate.

It would be entering too deeply into the agriculture ſtate of this kingdom, to explain at large, the many abuſes originating from the mode too generally practiſed in leaſing lands—I ſhall not dwell upon thoſe evils reſulting from the vaſt extent of farms ſo generally found in many diſtricts of this country, a ſubject, rather the duty of a ſtatiſtical obſerver, than the writer of an eſſay of this nature. I ſhall more particularly confine myſelf to the mode, in which leaſes are granted, which with regard to political effects merits every attention. I allude to the ſtate of the real farmers of Ireland, as diſtinguiſhed from the middle men. Theſe occupying tenants, are a ſet of men, to whoſe labour and induſtry ſociety owes moſt—a ſet of men who owe leaſt to their country—to whom oppreſſion is no ſtranger, and who to gain independence, muſt paſs through an ordeal, that I muſt confeſs,

an Iriſhman alone would have patience to attempt. To draw the picture of calamity is at no time pleaſing. If to paint oppreſſion in the glowing colours of a feeling mind, would be here neceſſary—who is ignorant of what I would wiſh to deſcribe? the animated impulſe of every honeſt heart, has long ere now beat with correſpondent feelings, wiſhed to point out the remedy, and ſickened to think that, a cuſtom ſo univerſal, muſt truſt a good deal to the hand of time and experience for an effectual remedy. Yet I ſhould be ſtiled a mere declaimer, and perhaps might merit the reproach were I to ſtop here—ſince I have ventured upon the ſubject, it is my duty to explain myſelf more fully. The middle men of Ireland are thoſe who with propriety may be defined "upſtart gentlemen"—who, generally ſpeaking, have much confidence, many pretenſions, and little humanity:—who think for themſelves alone, regard the little tenant as their property, conſider every ſcheme excuſable to which pro-

fit is annexed, and yet reſort not to thoſe modes of induſtry, by which theſe profits might be juſtifiably doubled. Theſe are the men, who are the curſe of every country in which they are known: but who are no where recogniſed, as a diſtinct claſs of individuals, except where agriculture is at its loweſt verge. To every general rule there muſt be exceptions—to this I know many; and yet, I believe my picture will be recognized, as juſt in the outline. Againſt univerſal habit, the legiſlature is no ſafeguard; the laws of this country are admirable; but in how many inſtances has precept preceded example?—The time however approaches, when even abſentees will recognize the injuſtice they do themſelves and their country, from leaſing ſuch extenſive diſtricts to individuals, with power to lord it over ſome thouſands of poor occupiers of that ſoil, upon which the intermidate tenant has perhaps never beſtowed one hours labour, one ſixpence to ameliorate, or one thought—but to harraſs

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the induſtrions cultivator and his helpleſs family. Will not the worm even riſe againſt you if trampled upon? who then ſhall wonder to obſerve ſeditious principles ſwallowed by an ignorant, a deluded multitude, to whom in many caſes, *hereafter*, define it as you may, would be preferable to his preſent exiſtence. Thank God the time is at hand, (I flatter myſelf I am not miſtaken) when a Union with Great Britain, pointing out ſo many incentives to induſtry, ſo many channels of wealth, and caſting ſuddenly aſide the veil of prejudice, muſt expand the native genius and humanity of Iriſhmen; and teach them that they now can boaſt of reſources within themſelves, which but to cultivate, muſt make them riſe ſuperior to what, even twenty years ago, it would have been conſidered a hyperbole to look up to.

The conſequences reſulting from abſentees are perhaps none of the leaſt of thoſe hardſhips complained of, not ſo much to the

the country at large from their withdrawing from its circulation, ſo great a capital as the rents of their properties; as to individuals, from the want of that ſource of happineſs, which they would experience more immediately, under the countenance of a kind landlord. How many men are there, who bleſt with the nobleſt ſpirit of philanthrophy, could, from the dictates of their own heart, find an eaſy, a certain remedy to many evils, which are unattended to by thoſe who have neither intereſt to induce, or compaſſion to point out a remedy? evils, which in many inſtances, I am convinced, are ſufficiently grounded to warrant redreſs—which, were they even viſionary, the ſoothing, the perſuaſive voice of a compaſſionate landlord, could, by humouring, eaſily blot out by a ſmile, in place of their being turned into real hardſhips by the humours of an unfeeling agent.—Were the mode in which the rents are levied in many places of this country, attended to by the legiſlator, a remedy might be found

for

for much of the diſcontent which pervades the lower ranks of ſociety in this kingdom. Did the great proprietors of land liſten to their own intereſt, they would ſometimes recollect what Bacon in his apoghthegms, relates of James the firſt of England,——" Gentlemen," ſaid the king," at London, you are like ſhips in a ſea, which ſhew like nothing; but in your country villages, you are like ſhips in a river, which look great things."—But, ſays the oppoſer of the Union, if abſentees are at preſent found a real evil, how much more ſo muſt that afterwards be felt, when inducements for emigrating are multiplied, and the impoſſiblity exiſts of reſiding beyond that ſphere, where profit, honour and riches are alone diſtributed. In the firſt place, Scotland experiences the ſame evil, but there it is made up,—by poſſeſſing a free unreſtricted commerce with that country, which ſwallows up ſo great a proportion of her rents. At preſent Ireland cannot poſſibly advert to ſuch a return: her

trade

trade with Great Britain being cramped.—Did therefore the evil even increaſe with the Union, it would find a remedy within itſelf of the ſame nature with Scotland.

But even the neceſſary connection which a member of the Britiſh legiſlature muſt keep up berwixt himſelf and his conſtituents, for the purpoſe of ſuſtaining his political influence, will render it neceſſary for him to ſpend part of his time in the country. Profit alone will lead him to it, for as one of the conſequences of a Union an increaſe of Engliſh capital flowing into this kingdom, attended by the example of genius, œconomy, and regularity in farming, will of itſelf create a deſire, if not to improve in huſbandry, at leaſt to make the moſt of the ſoil: and let any liberal minded Iriſhman examine to what a height that improvement might be brought, (particularly in the province of Connaught,) not even carrying the idea to the ſummit of human improvement, yet ſtill it is incalculable.—

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Have I ſtrained my argument beyond all probable foreſight, by reſting it upon ſuch foundations? I hope not.—I have calculated principally upon the juſtifiable pride and avarice of mankind, nor would it be difficult to find others to ſupport my poſition.—One author I beg leave to quote upon this ſubject, the celebrated Arthur Young, who in his tour through Ireland, in the year 1778, makes the following obſervation upon a Union, and particularly as to the probable effects of the increaſing number of abſentees.—" In converſation upon " the ſubject of a Union with Great Britain, " I was informed that nothing was ſo un- " popular in Ireland as ſuch an idea, and " that the great objection to it was increaſ- " ing the number of abſentees.—When " it was in agitation, 20 peers and 60 " commoners were talked of to ſit in the " Britiſh Parliament, which would be the " reſidence of 80 of the beſt eſtates in " Ireland. Going every year to England, " would by degrees, make them reſidents;

" they

" they would educate their children there,
" and in time become mere abſentees:
" becoming ſo, they would be unpopular,
" others would be elected, who, treading
" in the ſame ſteps, would yield the place
" ſtill to others; and thus, by degrees, a
" vaſt portion of the kingdom now reſident
" would be made abſentees: which would,
" they think, be ſo great a drain to
" Ireland, that a free trade would not re-
" pay it.

" I think the idea is erroneous, were it
" only for one circumſtance, the kingdom
" would loſe, according to this reaſoning,
" an idle race of country gentlemen, and
" in exchange their ports would fill
" with ſhips and commerce, and all the
" conſequences of commerce: an exchange
" that never yet proved diſadvantageous
" to any country."

Had I not been afraid of becoming prolix, I might have dwelt upon ſubjects

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which, indeed as to their conſequence, I have rather hurried over than defined; it is my wiſh, however, more to furniſh matter for others, than to attempt myſelf what I am little able to execute; and if I have failed in proving the benefits of a Union at the preſent criſis, it muſt be entirely owing to the mode in which I have arranged my arguments, not that theſe arguments in themſelves are null and frivolous.

But there are ſome who contend, that, a Union with Great Britain can at no time take place, but, to the total annihilation of the kingdom of Ireland.—With ſuch, every argument muſt be unavailing, for even truth itſelf would fail, were ſhe to deſcend from above, and dictate to them from the mouth of omnipotence.——To theſe Gentlemen, I ſhould beg leave to put one queſtion: is not that ſituation to be preferred, which holds out to men of enterprize, a choice, where formerly there was none?—I pretend not to define, what

may

may be the articles of the treaty betwixt Great Britain and Ireland, but ſurely without the ſpirit of prophecy, we may at leaſt foreſee, immenſe commercial advantages reſulting to the Iriſh nation, which muſt give in particular to the ſouth and weſt coaſts of this iſland, ſuch benefits, as are hardly calculable!—And is that of little avail, which conduces to call forth the genius and ability of a great nation?—In place of Dublin being the mart for talents, will not Cork, Waterford, Galway, Limerick, all claim their ſhare?—Yes, innumerable little villages upon theſe coaſts, will riſe into opulence; if not from mere nonentity, at leaſt from a ſituation ſomewhat approaching to it! Much has been ſaid by theſe Gentlemen, about the inſufficiency of Parliament to change the nature of the government,—I pretend not to dive into the mode by which Great Britain may attempt to eſtabliſh a Union of this nature; but it is at leaſt conſiſtent to ſuppoſe, that, ſhould the meaſure be brought forward by the

Britiſh Cabinet,—it can be gained only by thoſe means, which, ſhould the ſpirit of party, at ſome future period, think proper to canvaſs,—would even then, ſecure the voice of the nation, as conſtitutional. 'Tis unfair to argue upon a ſuppoſed data; —our very principles may be wrong;— What then becomes of our concluſions?

A pamphlet, entitled, "No Union," famed principally for its ſcurrility, has ventured, in contradiction to both truth and reaſon, to commence its carreer of oppoſition, by remarking in the firſt place, the prejudicial effects of the Union upon Scotland. Take this declaimer, in the way he wiſhes to be underſtood in,—and Scotland, and her countrymen,—poor, barbarous, and unprincipled, ſold themſelves for gold; and gained, eternal infamy attached to their character and kingdom; bent under the foot of their oppreſſor,— and thanked heaven for depriving them, of the ſmalleſt chance of arriving, at that

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pitch of civilivation, which, in the natural progreſs of Europe to refinement, it had once ſome chance of reaching!—Churchill, Johnſon, and Macklin, are that author's three ſupporters. The firſt a man of a moſt infamous character; the ſecond contracting his antipathy to Scotland from Lord Bute's adminiſtration; and the third, a buffoon!—Worthy ſupporters of ſuch a hero!—Ignorance alone muſt have curtailed the authorities of the learned barriſter; for were ſuch ſatisfactory, he might have indulged his ſpleen, by a numerous liſt of ſupporters, that perhaps might have gained him greater attention. Since therefore, by calling in queſtion, the propriety of the Union of Great Britain as to Scotland, he has attempted to ſhew to the people of Ireland, the ſnare that is laid for themſelves; I ſhall briefly narrate thoſe circumſtances which gave riſe to it, affected it; and is at preſent the ſource of happineſs to both kingdoms.

From

From the firſt æra of the Engliſh and Scottiſh monarchy, to the reign of James the fifth, an eternal feud may be ſaid to have exiſted between the kingdoms; originating in the firſt place, from jealouſy, on the one hand ſupported by power and riches, on the other, by an independant ſpirit; in the ſecond place, from private quarrels amongſt the boarderers.—There were others of leſs conſequence, which gave riſe to continual jarrings; and it was even a maxim of the Scottiſh government, not to accept of too long a truce with England, leſt its warlike ſpirit ſhould be blunted. Whilſt England, therefore, in the gradual courſe of civilization, kept pace with the continental powers;—Scotland, from its poverty and ſituation, (excluded by England from the benefits of commerce) pauſed, or at moſt, very ſlowly advanced to refinement. Thoſe who are acquainted with the French authors, about the middle of the ſixteenth century, may form

form perhaps a comparative idea of the kingdom of Scotland, at that period.

When king James the ſixth, was fairly eſtabliſhed upon the throne of England,—a Union of both kingdoms was moſt earneſtly ſought after by the king; but as Hume wiſely obſerves, in this buſineſs "the commons ſhewed, a greater ſpirit of "independence, than any true judgment "of national intereſt;"—it miſcarried, at the ſame time, with ſeveral other meaſures, which the king had then almoſt as much at heart.—When the ſubject was again introduced, in the time of Queen Anne;—it was principally oppoſed by that party, in the Scots parliament, devoted to the court of St. Germains;—the dukes of Hamilton and Athole, the diſappointed leaders of two oppoſite factions, alſo ſecretly attached to that court, and then coaleſceing through party motives;—and by the leaders of the preſbyterian intereſt; who fearful of a change, in church government,

vernment, co-operated with the puritans, and every ſect of diſſenters, to fruſtrate the meaſure.—It was chiefly through their influence, that ſuch tumults were raiſed, as had not been witneſſed ſince the revolution;—and if the ſum of twenty thouſand pounds was upon this occaſion *lent* by the queen to the Scottiſh treaſury,—a *loan* ſo ſmall, will not juſtify the expreſſion, that the Scots ſold their country for gold. The majority of the nation, had already declared in its favor;—every ſecurity was given to the preſbyterians for the eſtabliſhment of their form of worſhip;—and fatal muſt have been the conteſt, had arms been reſorted to. It may rationally be ſuppoſed, that humanity dictated the diſtribution of ſuch a ſum, as a compenſation to men, who, either from ſituation or circumſtances, muſt have been loſers by the buſineſs; or, who, by their endeavours to promote ſo beneficial a treaty, merited the reward of their labors. Dr. Smollet writing upon this ſubject, expreſſes

ſes himſelf, thus, "The majority of both "nations believed that the treaty would "produce violent convulſions, or, at "beſt, prove ineffectual. But we now "ſee it has been attended with none of the "calamities that were prognoſticated; "that it quietly took effect, and fully an-"ſwered all the purpoſes for which it was "intended. Hence, we may learn, that "many great difficulties are ſurmounted, "becauſe they are not ſeen by thoſe who "direct the execution of any great pro-"ject; and that many ſchemes, which "theory deems impracticable, will yet "ſucceed in the experiment."

The foundation of the rebellions, which afterwards took place in that kingdom, was laid at a period before the Union exiſted. Every ſource of hope, was then, certainly abſtracted from the family of king James the ſecond:—Yet, we may fairly preſume, that theſe rebellions would at any rate have occurred, although that

Union never had been heard of.—It now almoſt amounts to a certainty, that the queen herſelf was favorable to the cauſe of her brother;—and a claim at that time ſo recognized; how can we wonder, that it ſhould afterwards have had ſo many abettors?—How fondly attached at every period, the Scots have been to the family of Stuart, need not be inſiſted upon!

But the author of the pamphlet alluded to, has thought proper in a ſtrain of abſurd declamation (not unlike the ſpurious rhetorick, of a French orator of the preſent day,) to obſerve, that before three years had elapſed, the treaty of Union was broke, and the paſſing of the malt tax is brought forward by him, as an inſtance of what may be expected by the Iriſh, from any ſimilar treaty. Could he not have alſo remarked, that by the 20th clauſe of the Articles of Union, all heretable juriſdictions, &c. were reſerved to the owners; yet notwithſtanding this

treaty,—

treaty,—in the year 1747 an act paſſed for aboliſhing them. This though a complete emancipation of the Highlanders, from a badge of feudal ſervitude;—and although it might be juſtly argued, that until then, the Scots had acquired no individual freedom, and but a partial advantage from the treaty;—yet, according to that author's mode of reaſoning, being in breach of a law paſſed 40 years before, no allowance was to be made for conſequences, unforeſeen, when that clauſe was under deliberation. Why did he not alſo remark, that in the year 1708—when an invaſion of Scotland by the Pretender was expected,—A bill was brought into the Houſe of Lords, under the title of an act for improving the Union of the two kingdoms, relative to trials for high treaſon in Scotland, which with ſome ſmall variation, were in future to be regulated, according to the manner of the Engliſh proceedings. Both of them were complete infractions of the Union; yet I ſhall take

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it upon me to ſay, the conſtitution ſo far from being underminded, was ſupported by them; and had not the treaty been broke, the kingdom of Great Britain muſt have been endangered.—As to the paſſing the bill for the malt tax, and the conſequent movement of another, for diſſolving the Union, it may juſtly be obſerved that the ſpirit of oppoſition more than any other circumſtance was the author of the meaſure; and how do I ſupport this?—but by obſerving, that all the Whig Members voted for the diſſolution of that treaty, which they had ſo eagerly promoted—whilſt the Tories, ſtrenuouſly ſupported the meaſure, againſt which they had once argued with ſuch vehemence. In ſetting forth all the complaints brought at this time by the Scotch againſt the Britiſh government in conſequence of the violation of the Union,—Mr. Spencer in his pamphlet obſerves, that it was then alſo ſtated as a grievance that they had no more a council in Scotland. In juſtice he

ſhould

ſhould have remarked, that it was left in the power of the parliament of Great Britain to continue or ſet it aſide. It would be hard indeed, if in the hiſtory of a noble heart, every unfortunate action, which paſſion, thoughtleſſneſs, or inebriety gave riſe to, were to be conſidered as ſtudied malevolence; and the unintended, unforeſeen conſequences of one ſingle deviation from the ſtricteſt virtue, attributed to the moſt vicious propenſities. So in the hiſtory of a great and generous nation like Great Britain—ever active in the cauſe of freedom, ever ſtrenuous to promote it—it would be abſurd indeed, to aſcribe ſome particular inſtances of oppreſſion, as a conſtitutional failing.—Party politics may countenance many diſorders, the conſtitution diſowns them; and when weighed in her ballance the hand of time has ever rectified them. Let the ſtream of Britiſh politics be at any time ever ſo muddy, it is fed by ſprings, too numerous and too pure, to endanger its channel being choaked, and the bark on which

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our fortunes are entruſted, ſtranded and ingulphed. Whilſt the ſun of the greater nations of Europe ſeems ſetting, ours is yet in its meridian glory—Let us be true to ourſelves, and united we may brave the world.

As I have before obſerved, this illeberal barriſter has contended, without bringing any argument to his ſupport, that the Union has been prejudicial to Scotland; and that in the natural progreſs of civilization throughout Europe, that country might poſſibly have been raiſed to a far more proſperous ſtate than it is at preſent. It poſſibly might—What reſtrictions, what eircumſtances have prevented it? Here my Author is ſilent—he has looked backward indeed, to ſome purpoſe, and with equal effect, I doubt not has he ſearched into the depth of futurity, when he forebodes the moſt diſmal effects from a Union, to the Iriſh nation. If the effects are ſuch as Scotland has experienced, ſhe has little reaſon

to fear them. To thoſe who are acquainted with that country I have no wiſh to ſpeak, let me adviſe thoſe who are ignorant of it, to conſult ſome other author than that gentleman whoſe illiberal abuſe ſets him beneath contempt, and who will but find ſupporters amongſt thoſe, who derive their intelligence, from ſources equally ridiculous. Let me aſk this intelligent gentleman—did he ever ſee Scotland?—I ſuſpect not—his knowledge and travels ſeem to be equally circumſcribed; and bigotted as he ſeems to opinions, which have their foundation only in ignorance, it would perhaps be abſurd in me to inform him, that Scotland has not yet departed from her reputation in learning; her extenſive acquirements in agriculture, argue moſt feelingly with thoſe, who examining the face of the country, are capable of calculating her reſources in this reſpect, and the daily advancement made by her towards perfection.—Her encreaſing commerce ſpeaks for itſelf; out of what has Glaſgow, Paiſley,

Greenock,

Greenock, &c. ariſen? Edinburgh it is ſaid has remained ſtationary.—Indeed!—How old is the new town of Edinburgh?—or if that is no ſign of its advancement in commerce—why ſhould there have been lately a neceſſity for an act of Parliament for enlarging the harbour of Leith? A neceſſity long acknowledged, before that ever the act was introduced, to the Britiſh Houſe of legiſlature. But Scotland it is ſaid, by the Union, was deprived of a very advantageous trade with France.—Once for all let me remark to thoſe carpers, who conſider argument as proof; that England could at any time reſtrict the trade of Scotland;—and from the relative ſituation of the countries, reduce it to nothing. And is it from France Scotland was to derive its advantageous trade? If ſo, Scotland muſt, during almoſt the whole of this century, have been at war with England, to have profited by ſuch a commerce. What then muſt have been its ſituation?—A brave, a hardy independent nation!—But poor, uncultivated, and

cheriſhing in inacceſſible mountains, a liberty that all the power of Edward the 1ſt never could fetter.

The ſettlement of the Scots at the Iſthmus of Darien, is intruded as a ſtrong example of the ſpirit of enterpriſe in the Scottiſh nation before the Union—a ſpirit in all likelihood to encreaſe; the author, however, when firſt adverting to the circumſtance, has forgot to mention, that it was owing to the jealouſy of the Engliſh government, that this deſign was fruſtrated;—a jealouſy which inimical and deſtructive as it was in this inſtance, it may with confidence be ſaid, that in every other enterpriſe of the kind, it would have interfered with equal ſucceſs. I have never denied the ambition of Scotland to become a flouriſhing nation. I have merely attempted to prove that its ſituation, added to the jealouſy of England, muſt have ever prevented her from acquiring that ſucceſs in commercial enterpriſes, that affluence as a nation, which, prior to

a Union with her ancient enemy, ſhe had not the ſmalleſt pretenſions to.

In the proſecution of ſyſtems, where, either a radical reform, or ſuch a change is attempted, as militates againſt former precedents,—it is contradictory to the hiſtory of mankind to expect, that the moſt upright meaſures alone will be reſorted to, to effect the object in view.—But to cry down the principal, becauſe the methods adopted may appear partly unjuſtifiable, none but ignorance itſelf will attempt.—We are all eager to acknowledge the bleſſings we enjoy, as members of the Proteſtant Communion.—We can now at a diſtance trace the gradual expanſion, of the human mind, under its auſpices;—freed from the bigotry of perſecution, unfettered by ſyſtems which left hardly the liberty of thought.—Yet look back, and ſcan the progreſs of that reformation, particularly in Great Britain.

—It

—It grew up thro' a complication of ſuch crimes, as might be almoſt ſuppoſed to marr the very foundation of public virtue, —of public faith.—But inauſpicious as were its firſt auſpices,—time ſoftened its features,—and with exultation, do we now recur to it, as the deareſt pledge we enjoy, of that liberty, ſo often ſealed by the blood of our anceſtors.—

What therefore would be thought of that man, who would now venture to defame the reformation, becauſe the characters of ſome of our firſt reformers, militated againſt every principle of ſociety?—Would he not be told, to look to the reformation itſelf, as the beſt apology for its ſupporters?—Why then ſhould I go further?—Let thoſe petulant critics, who pretend to decry the character of a nation, (whoſe merits they are ſo ill qualified to eſtabliſh) from the conduct of ſome individuals, inſtrumental in bringing forward their Union with England,—look up to

thoſe bleſſings, which both countries acknowledge from ſuch a meaſure, as their ſureſt guide to criticiſm;—ſhould they wiſh to reſt that criticiſm upon the broad baſis of public utility!

I muſt confeſs myſelf at a loſs to follow the gentlemen lately referred to through many of their arguments. In ſpeaking of the rebellion in Scotland, it is remarked by the author of the pamphlet, entitled "Reaſons againſt the Union," that it is clear, that from theſe inſtances, the Scots were tinctured with French principles for a generation after the Union. This, God knows, is as unfounded an argument as could be well advanced. I have already ſpoke to the ſubject. The Scots were indeed attached to the family of Stewart, as the heirs of their ancient monarchy:—but from ſuch a predilection the author of the pamphlet above alluded to, might as well have argued, that they were attached to the Catholic religion, as

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to the Court of France. And does this gentleman pretend to ſay, that from Great Britain, Ireland drew the venom which hath tinctured her principles, with what I may juſtly ſtyle the blaſphemies of the French revolution?—Impudent aſſertion! In the boſom of Ireland has long been nurtured thoſe ſeeds of rebellion, which, to the ruin of thouſands, burſt forth at laſt; a rebellion originating partly from an oppreſſion exerciſed by themſelves—partly from the moſt execrable treaſons that ever were planned. Where were the riſings in either England or Scotland?—Fools and deſperadoes may be any where found:—but the people were too wiſe, and too honeſt, to place either their happineſs or fortunes, at the mercy of unprincipled villains.

It is from this conſideration, chiefly that Ireland ſhould look up to a Union with England, as the ſource of her future proſperity. It is this conſideration which may prompt England at this moment, to propoſe

poſe a Union with Ireland, as a bulwark to her own ſecurity—for the ſafety of both realms.

But it is ſaid, that the relative ſituation and circumſtances of Ireland, with England, are ſo materially different with theſe of Scotland, at the time of the Union, that no argument brought forward, to favour the Union of Great Britain, can poſſibly apply in this inſtance. In ſome points it may be ſo. There is not here the ſame apprehenſion at preſent, as there was prevalent in Scotland, that the Crown of the two realms ſhould be ſeparated. Yet even that might be diſputed by thoſe, who, ſtudying what might have been the effects of the late rebellion, had it been ſucceſsful; perhaps wiſely conſider, a Union, as the moſt effectual bar to any ſuch attemps in future.—There are not here the ſame grounds for apprehenſion, which had the family of Stuart gained poſſeſſion of the Scottiſh throne, at ſome future period, might have refuted

reſulted to that country, viz. that the Roman Catholic religion, might firſt have found a protector and afterwards an eſtabliſhment:—Yet thoſe who calculate upon the power of the Roman Catholics in this country, and the advantages they would naturally have reaped, had the late deſperate meaſures been ſucceſsful; may poſſibly conſider, that the Proteſtant intereſt of Ireland, can look for certain protection no where, but in a Union.—Ireland indeed has a more ſucceſsful commerce, than Scotland enjoyed previous to the Union:—Yet, that a Union would bring an incalculable encreaſe of commerce to this country, is ſelf-evident to every one, thoſe excepted, who are wilfully blind.—There are indeed ſome contented ſouls in this country, who diſdaining an obligation, and ignorant at the ſame time how to requite it,—wiſh Ireland to truſt to its own perſeverance, and prognoſticate a ſucceſs equal to their moſt ardent expectations.—To theſe I could almoſt ſay "my honeſt friends, you are already

"ſo

" ſo much obliged to England, that to at-
" tempt at remuneration, is upon your
" part impoſſible, upon ours, unwiſhed
" for; the moſt thankleſs indeed, are
" ſometimes thoſe, who, like you, are
" glutted by a proſperity, they have reaped
" from friends, whom they can ne-
" ver expect to repay. Accept however
" ſtill theſe kindneſſes, which have help-
" ed to raiſe you to ſo proſperous a ſituati-
" on;—nor from an unjuſtifiable pride, re-
" ject that aſſiſtance, which hath ſo often
" ſupported you, and call down upon your
" heads at ſome future period, the
" curſes of your children." But it is ar-gued by one of its oppoſers, that from the ſituation of Ireland, God Almighty ne-ver intended ſuch a circumſtance ſhould take place as a Union of Great Britain and Ireland. Perhaps this gentleman reaſons from revelation!—if ſo—what a pity for both kingdoms, that the Omni-potent had not conſulted him in the buſi-neſs; we might then have hoped, his pa-

triotiſm

triotiſm and foreſight, could have effected what now there is ſo abſolute a bar put to. This hypercritic recollects me of Sir Godfrey Kneller's anſwer to Pope, when remarking to him, how much more perfect the world would have been, had the Almighty had his aſſiſtance.—" 'Fore God " Sir" replied Kneller, " I believe ſo."—Yet after all, I ſhould ſuſpect his arguments are drawn from a ſource of intelligence, at which we have all an equal means to arrive at. But I muſt confeſs, I can obſerve nothing in the ſituation of Ireland as to Great Britain which bars ſuch a proſpect. I can figure each of them in turns—mutual bulwarks to the other.—I ſee deficiences in the ſituation of each, which each can ſupply.—I can at leaſt flatter myſelf, that in the mind of every honeſt man, confidence from mutual benefits, will ſucceed to jealouſy;—enough in itſelf at any time, to double the ſtrength of a country.

With thoſe who muſt be miſerable, ſhould they have no opportunity of declaiming:—with thoſe to whom right or wrong are equally acceptable, with whom, ſelf-intereſt or the gratification of party ſpirit, is the moſt material conſideration; it is alike indifferent what arguments they bring forward to advance their purpoſe. The veil of ſophiſtry may either totally conceal their fallacious tendency, or caſt a ſhade on their imperfections. Party publications may in general excuſe ſuch a reflection; nor do I think that the ſpirit of ſome of theſe lately uſhered into the world, upon the preſent queſtion, will make me bluſh for the cenſure. Look to thoſe which are written directly againſt the Union, and which, in place of treating the ſubject in a candid, liberal manner condemn it in toto, and can find no argument poſſibly to juſtify it.—To believe them, the ruin of Ireland is as certain, as that the ſea ſurrounds it; nor do I doubt, but that ſuch patriotic ſentiments, will gain many votaries amongſt thoſe who

who never yet thought for themſelves. De Lolme, ſpeaking of the trade of Ireland in the year 1780, makes an obſervation ſomewhat a of ſimilar tendency; that, "the reſtraints "on it, though detrimental, were not of "that calamitous nature, which was re-"preſented by political ſpeakers, even in "the Britiſh Parliament, at the time we "are ſpeaking of, or which was no doubt "believed by many individuals in Ireland." ——This remark I hope will juſtify me.—Theſe boiſterous demagogues take hold of a popular ſubject, to wreſt it for their own purpoſes; let the peel be ever ſo bitter, there will be found fools to ſwallow it;—paſſion too often blinds the human mind; nor is it, until after circumſtances have occurred, which lead to more temperate conſideration, that they take time to curſe the fiend that has blinded their judgement.

I now bid adieu to a ſubject, which perhaps in the opinion of moſt, it might bave "been

been better, had I not intermeddled with. However inconcluſive my arguments may be eſteemed, my intentions at leaſt have been good; and moſt fortunate ſhall I eſteem myſelf, whatever criticiſm may attach to theſe pages, ſhould I prevail upon others, whoſe pretenſions and abilities deſervedly bear ſuperior weight with the public; to expoſe thoſe arguments which, under the maſk of patriotiſm, the oppoſers of the Union have but brought forward, to cover purpoſes, ſelfiſh at beſt, perhaps of a more vicious tendency.—With pride then ſhould every lover of his country behold in that Union, the bulwark of their conſtitution: —the torch which ſhall guide them, through their preſent maze of diſtraction:—a mine whoſe treaſures ages ſhall not exhauſt;—and a barrier againſt thoſe outrages, which threaten to bring back this kingdom to the age of Gothic barbarity.

FINIS.